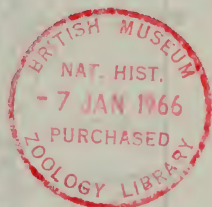


BULLETIN
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The six hundred and thirtieth meeting of the Club was held at the Rubens Hotel, London, on the 21st December, 1965.

Chairman: MR. R. S. R. FITTER

Members present: 22; guests, 8

Mr. M. D. England spoke on a visit he and others paid to an area of eastern Portugal, illustrating his talk with many superb coloured slides showing the country and some of the birds, those of *Otis tarda* the Great Bustard at the nest and a family of *Monticola solitarius*, the Blue Rock Thrush being of particular excellence.

Note on Chapin's Swift

by A. PRIGOGINE

Received 22nd August, 1965

Since the description in 1957 of *Apus myoptilus chapini* Prig., its distribution area in the eastern part of the République démocratique du Congo (fig. 1) has been delimited rather exactly by intensive collecting and some personal observations.

This swift exists not only at low altitudes under 1,000 m, as in the neighbourhood of Kamituga and Kitutu (Kivu), but it also lives in the mountains north-west of Lake Tanganyika up to an altitude of 2,000 m. In the north, *A. m. chapini* has been found in the transition forest of Mount Nyombe, but I should not be surprised if further collecting showed its presence also in the region west of Lake Kivu. In the south, *chapini* reaches Mount Kabobo where it was caught even at the altitude of 2,450 m.

In the Maniema I have identified Chapin's swift in different localities, especially in July. As one specimen has been collected at Kama, the presence of this swift in the Maniema is established with certitude.

The same swift exists also in Angola, at Mount Moco, where Rudyerd Bulton collected a specimen on 27th February, 1931. Traylor found that it belongs to the subspecies *chapini*. Without any doubt, this population

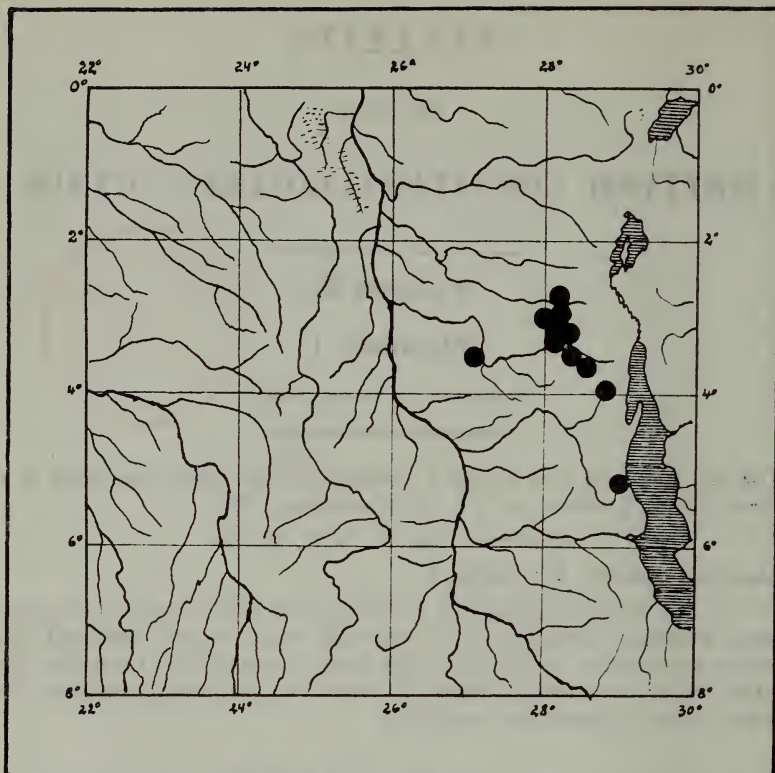


Fig. 1. Distribution of *Apus myoptilus chapini* in the eastern part of the République démocratique du Congo.

is different from the one of the Kivu-Maniema area, Chapin's swift being unknown from the intermediate country.

In Kamituga this bird normally appears about the middle of June, as in 1954, 1956, 1958 and 1964 and even on 30th May, as in 1957 and 1960. From July to September *chapini* may often be seen over the locality of Kamituga. But in October, it becomes rare and I noticed its presence only on the 7th (1956), on the 18th (1957) and on the 26th (1957). Then, in November and December, it is absent from Kamituga. In January it is still rare and only two specimens have been collected on the 8th in 1958. It also made a short appearance on the 21st (1962).

In February Chapin's swift was noticed again rather often over Kamituga, but not in great number. In March it becomes rare and I never saw it myself over Kamituga, though two specimens have been shot on the 7th (1958) and one on the 25th (1953), but on 26th March, 1957 I observed it at Bilembo, quite near Kamituga. In April I only saw it once over Kamituga (on the 27th, 1963) and during the whole month of May it is not generally in this locality.

In other places, in the Kivu area, Chapin's swift has been found from February to May and from July to November.

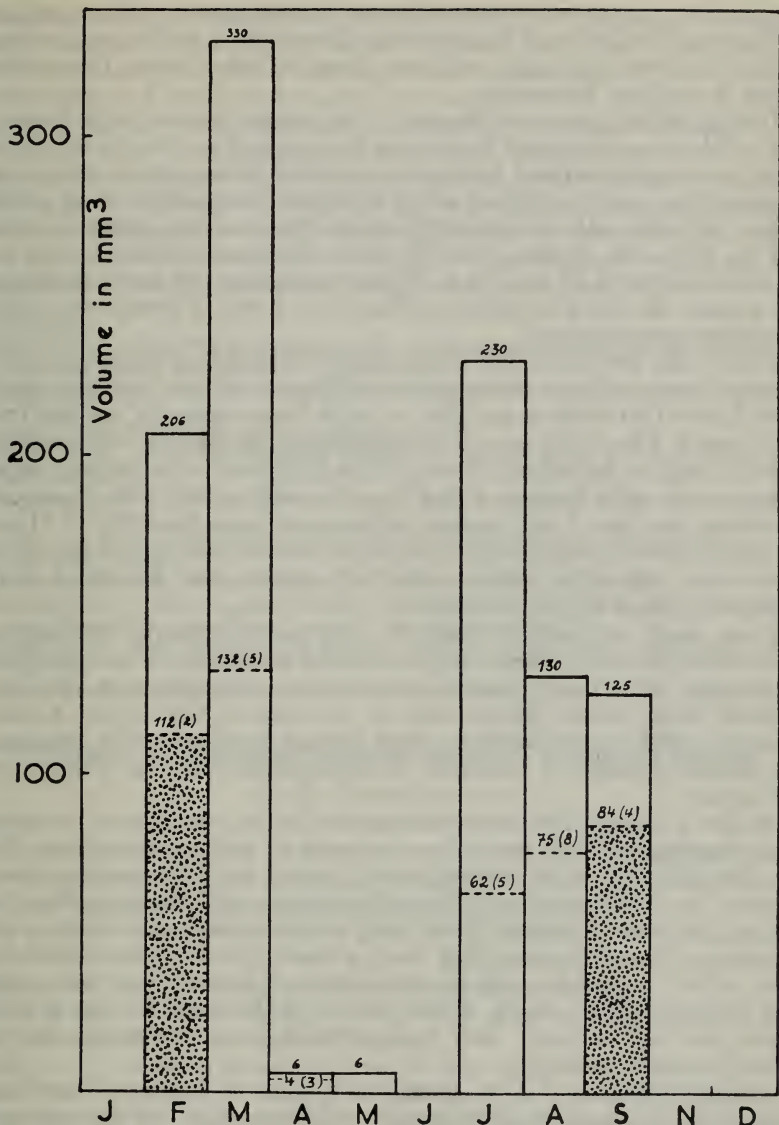


Fig. 2. Volume of the testes (upper value gives maximum, lower value indicates the mean and the number of specimens examined; females with enlarged oocytes collected during months shaded).

If one considers the entire region explored, it appears that *chapini* is present the whole year round except perhaps in December. But even if I was not able to find it during this month, it is not certain that it leaves this region only for such a short time and I feel we can admit that it is present during the whole year. Anyway, it is established that it has local migratory movements. In October-November particularly, it seems to go south

and, in fact, the only specimens collected during those months came from Tubangwa (October) and Mubandakila (November), in the southern part of the Itombwe highlands, and even from Mount Kabobo (November) where it was very numerous.

During certain periods of the year *A. m. chapini* joins in large flocks. It is possible to see hundreds flying over Kamituga from July to September which are months without heavy rains. Sometimes these birds fly very low in open places and a great part of my specimens were caught in my garden with a very thin silk net stretched between two bamboo stems, at about 6–8 m. from the ground. On 29th July, 1962 near Kitutu I even met thousands between 12 and 1 p.m. It was very sunny and the birds close to the ground. By fixing a mist-net between two stems of *Pennisetum* several specimens were collected.

I have also been told that at the end of July and in the beginning of August, these swifts are so numerous and they fly so low in certain places near Kitutu that children are able to catch them simply by striking them with a stick. That is the way all my specimens from Bionga were caught.

From June to September, during the months with little rainfall, *chapini* appears very often between 1 and 2 p.m. over Kamituga, very numerous and flying very low. I also noticed them several times from 8.30 to 11 a.m. At that time they are generally flying higher up and they are not numerous. Sometimes, but rather seldom, this bird appears over Kamituga in the afternoon, about 4 p.m. and later.

From April to August, Chapin's swift forms generally homogenous flocks without other swifts; it is possible that sometimes *A. barbatus roehli* Reichenow joins these groups and starting in September *A. apus apus* (Linné) forms mixed parties with *A. m. chapini*. On Mount Kabobo Chapin's swift was shot among a flock formed principally of *A. apus apus*: on Mount Nyombe, at Butokolo, *A. schoutedeni* Prig. also joins groups of *chapini*.

At first I thought that the gatherings of Chapin's swift were in relation to its breeding activity, but it does not seem to be the case, because there are two distinct seasons for egg-laying. During the first breeding season, centred on February, it is rather infrequent to see large assemblies, but during the second period, from July to September, this swift is very numerous. Now I suppose that these gatherings are in connection with food supply, especially with the abundance of insects in certain regions and during certain periods of the year. It is the same for the hours at which the swifts appear: their flying altitude is also related to the presence of certain insects.

The reproduction of *A. m. chapini* takes place in February–March and from July to September. Two females with oocytes of 5–6 mm. diameter have been collected in February and September: another female shot in September even had an oocyte of 10 mm. Three females also collected in February and September had enlarged oocytes. The volume of the testes (fig. 2) shows two pronounced peaks. From April to July sexual activity ceases. For the period of October to January I have only four specimens: the gonads of two birds have not been examined and the two females collected in January had gonads at rest, but their tail is in heavy moult. It is difficult to say if reproduction ceases during these months, but for other Apodidae like *Apus affinis*, *Apus caffer* and *Apus horus* there is

definitely only one breeding season (see Moreau and Benson). It is necessary to examine the gonads of further specimens collected between October and January to have a true picture of the breeding of *A. m. chapini*.

Recently A. De Roo has studied the moult of *A. m. chapini*. His conclusions will be published in detail elsewhere. For some specimens the moult starts in the beginning of February (A. De Roo, *in litt.*). Yet for other birds it begins only in the latter part of April. The moult finishes, for the first specimens, perhaps in the beginning of June, but the first swift in fresh plumage was taken on 8th July. For the others the moult may continue until the middle of August, the last specimen which had not completed its moult having been caught on 2nd August.

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Hybrids of *Thraupis palmarum* and *Thraupis virens*

by F. HAVERSCHMIDT

Received 17th August, 1965

On 20th October, 1963 I collected in the forest near Phedra (Surinam-river) Surinam, out of a treetop, a bird which was at first sight intermediate between *Thraupis palmarum* and *Thraupis virens*.

In general coloration it is olive green as in *T. palmarum*, but the wing-coverts are pale blue as in *virens* and on the crown and on its upper and under parts there are bluish feathers among the green ones.

It is a male in non-breeding condition and is now preserved under my field number 6316 in the Leiden Museum.

Dr. G. F. Mees, curator of birds of that institution, confirmed my identification of the bird as a hybrid and he informed me that there were more intermediate specimens in the Leiden Museum where, in June, 1965, I had the opportunity of examining the series of *T. palmarum* and *T. virens*.

The small series of 27 specimens of *palmarum* from different parts of its range contained no less than 10 (including my specimen from Phedra) which are more or less intermediate, but the series of *virens* contained none.

The intermediate birds which must be considered hybrids are: three unsexed specimens from Costa Rica without further data and bought from Schlüter (two of them marked 5652 and the other unmarked) show